(c) people in general get information under right to information but replies to MPs letters are not received from ministries, rather a clicked reply is given which is mostly negative; and

(d) action being taken in this regard by Government?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE (SHRI PRITHVIRAJ CHAVAN): (a) and (b) Manual of Office Procedure and the instructions issued from time to time contain guidelines for prompt response to communications from MPs which are followed by Government servants. Delays sometime occur when the matter involves consultations with other Departments or State Governments or when reports have to be obtained from the authorities responsible for taking necessary action.

(c) and (d) Under RTI Act, only information held in the custody of Public Information Officer is made available as per the provisions of the Act, whereas in the case of communications received from MPs efforts are made to answer queries, give details and explanation as sought in the letters.

Fulfilment of backlog of SCs/STs

†3162. SHRI KRISHAN LAL BALMIKI: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the backlog of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes has been fulfilled in all departments as per the directions given by Prime Minister;

(b) if not, by when it will be fulfilled;

(c) whether Prime Minister is aware of this situation; and

(d) the aciton taken against the officers for not fulfilling the backlog?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE (SHRI PRITHVIRAJ CHAVAN): (a) and (b) A Special Recruitment Drive was launched to fill up the backlog reserved vacancies of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in the year 2004. More than 60,000 backlog vacancies were filled during the Drive. Another Special Recruitment Drive to fill up the backlog vacancies of the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Other Backward Classes has been launched in 2008.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) If any officer does not implement the provisions of reservation, action against him can be taken under the Conduct Rules.

Special package to Bihar government

3163. SHRI NARESH GUJRAL:
SHRI N.K. SINGH:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Planning Commission has, recently, praised Bihar State Government in regard to progress made in infrastructure, education, health sectors and economic growth in the past few years;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(b) if so, whether Government has provided any special benefits to the State Government of Bihar for various schemes; and

(c) if so, the details thereof and what other steps Government propose to take to provide special package to Bihar Government to uplift the status of backward and down- trodden people in the State?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING (SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY): (a) There has been progress in Bihar in various sectors which is reflected in the growth of Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP). The Average Annual Growth Rate of GSDP in Bihar was 10.5% during the period 2005-06 to 2007-08 compared to the National Average of 9.4%.

(b) and (c) The efforts of the State Government are already being supplemented through the funding under the Backward Regions Grant Fund(BRGF). Bihar gets funding under both the components of the scheme namely, (i) the Special Plan for Bihar under which an amount of Rs. 1000 crore per annum is being provided and (ii) the Districts component under which an allocation of Rs.639 crore has been provided in the current year. Thus, an amount of Rs.1639 crore out of the total funding of Rs.5800 crore under BRGF i.e., 28% of the outlay is allocated to Bihar. The Central Government has a number of schemes which deliver concrete benefits to the poor including the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, the Mid Day Meal Scheme, National Rural Health Mission, National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, the Indira Awas Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana, etc. Effective utilisation of funds available under the scheme depends on the efforts of the State Government.

Possibility of decrease in food prices

3164. SHRI TARIQ ANWAR:
DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY:
Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Deputy Chairman of Planning Commission has stressed for going ahead with the pending financial sector reforms as the liberalisation measures would not install country's growth process and anticipated rise in foreign investment flows would be good for the economy;

(b) whether he expressed concern over the current food prices led inflation which would ease in coming months with the arrival of rabi crops;

(c) whether Government has seriously considered increase in food prices which has affected common man; and

(d) if so, the steps his Ministry has taken to check these and by what time there would be a reduction in food prices?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING (SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY): (a) and (b) The financial sector reforms and inflation are subjects which fall in the domain of the Ministry of Finance. The Planning Commission has not sent any formal proposal to the Ministry of Finance in this regard.